ISSUE 08

AGRIVIEW

DECEMBER 2007 - JANUARY 2008 VOLUME 4

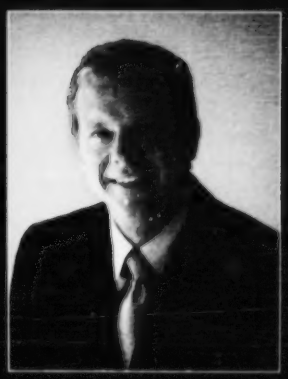
Agriview Photo Contest winner - Bonnie Potoroka page 8

FEEDING CATTLE IN COLD WEATHER PAGE 4

LAND RENTAL CONSIDERATIONS PAGE 11

BIOSECURITY MEASURES PAGE 14

Premier's Message



Greetings, Agriview readers!

This is a very busy and exciting time for me and every member of my team. We are honoured by the confidence that Saskatchewan people have expressed in us, and eager to get to work immediately to begin to fulfill the promises we have made. We have new, fresh ideas on how to keep our young people in Saskatchewan; how to improve our healthcare system; how to make our communities safer; and how to help our province go green. We want to support Saskatchewan families, create more jobs and fuel economic growth; and continue to build pride in this magnificent province we call home.

Led by Agriculture Minister Bob Bjornerud, we will be actively working with producers across the province and with the federal government to deal with the issues and explore the opportunities within Saskatchewan's vital agriculture industry.

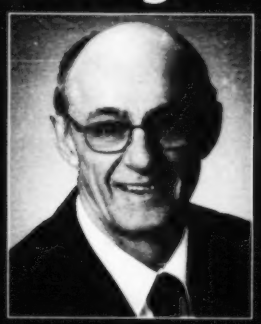
Our government's priorities are to ensure that Saskatchewan's economic boom turns into long-term prosperity and growth, and to make sure that this growth is used to secure the future for all Saskatchewan people.

On behalf of the new Government of Saskatchewan, I wish all readers of Agriview a wonderful holiday season and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

Brad Wall
Premier

Minister's Message



I am both proud and humbled to be given the responsibility of Minister for the important agriculture portfolio.

As a resident of rural Saskatchewan and a farmer myself, I am very familiar with the ups and downs our agriculture industry has experienced over the years. I am eager to work with producers and agribusinesses throughout the province, and with my counterparts across Canada to grow our industry.

Almost immediately after my appointment, I was able to tour Canadian Western Agribition and visit with producers on the grounds. I also had a chance to meet with representatives of the cattle and hog sectors to discuss the challenges their industries face. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments are examining possible solutions to these challenges.

I look forward to developing a positive working relationship with Minister Ritz and the federal government – and developing federal/provincial agricultural programming that better meets the needs of Saskatchewan producers!

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture

Deputy's Message

As the new Deputy Minister for Saskatchewan Agriculture, I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself to Agriview readers.

I've been involved in the agriculture industry for most of my life. For the past two years, I have worked with the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) – an organization that advocates an open and fair trading environment for agriculture and agri-food products – first as Vice-President and then as President. I have served as Director with Agricore United, Executive Director with the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, and Director of the George Morris Centre at the University of Guelph. I have also helped develop agricultural extension services in Atlantic Canada, and served as a national judge for Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' program and as a committee member for Canadian Western Agribition. My family currently owns and operates a grain farm at Edenwold.

My background leads me to believe, like our recently-elected leaders, that Saskatchewan's agriculture industry has a lot of untapped potential. I look forward to working with people throughout the province as, together, we develop policies and programs that help us capture that potential.

I wish you and your families a very happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Alanna Koch
Deputy Minister

2008-06072/

STORY SNAPSHOTS

Late season grazing

Crop insurance pilots wild rice program

Organic research workshop

Pick a locally grown Christmas tree or poinsettia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGRICULTURE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE 4

HARVEST PHOTO CONTEST 8

MANAGEMENT 10

ENVIRONMENT 13

AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT 15

FARM SAFETY 18

CROP DEVELOPMENT 19

ORGANICS 20

RESEARCH 21

EVENTS CALENDAR 24

Cover: Harvest Photo Contest winning photo

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

AGRIVIEW is published by the Communications Branch of Saskatchewan Agriculture for Saskatchewan farmers and farm and food organizations. **For more information, call 306-787-5160 or e-mail agriview@agr.gov.sk.ca.**
To view this publication online, visit www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/programs - services.

Late season grazing

by André Bonneau, PAg
Forage Conversion Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

A large portion of animal maintenance costs are feed related. The longer a producer can keep animals out on pasture, the greater the financial benefit to the producer. As long as the livestock's nutrient requirements are met, keeping cattle out of the yard longer will also be a benefit to animal health.

Stubble
The amount of grazing available on stubble will depend entirely on the amount of material left behind after harvest. Sloughs, water runs, fence lines, chaff, and straw can add a significant amount of forage. Once water and fencing is in place, grazing stubble can be very cost effective.

There's no danger of over-grazing stubble, so animals can stay on stubble as long as there is forage available. We can often expect enough forage on a quarter of land for at least 25 cows for one month. Of course, the amount depends on the residue left behind after harvest.

Perennial
Grazing hay fields late in the fall is acceptable once the plants have gone dormant. Perennial plants use the late summer and early fall to store energy for spring growth. A grazing event can signal the forage to re-grow, thus causing energy to be consumed rather than being stored. If grazing hay fields, wait late enough into the fall to ensure the crop is dormant. The stand should be grazed lightly to enhance snow catch.

Stockpiling
Some producers stockpile forages by leaving pasture un-grazed into the fall. Leave a stand untouched long enough to at least get to the early seed-set stage at dormancy. If left un-grazed too long, the forage can lose many leaves and the quality may be very poor.

Animal health
Keep in mind that mature grasses, mature alfalfa and straw can be very low quality. Ensure your livestock have enough energy and nutrients to maintain good health.

Conclusion
The key to late fall grazing is planning. Ruminant livestock are very good at converting low value forage into energy. The key is to make it accessible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

FEEDING CATTLE IN COLD WEATHER

by Murray Feist, PAg
Ruminant Nutrition Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

When developing a winter feeding program, the decision process is assisted by knowing the body condition of your cattle, and the quality of feed on hand.

The average body-condition score of a herd often dictates how a feed is used. The lower critical temperature of a "normal" body-conditioned cow in mid-gestation ranges from minus 10 to minus 25°C. Cattle with lower body-condition scores will increase feed consumption during these temperatures in an effort to stay warm.

Also, for every 10°C drop in temperature below a daytime temperature of minus 20°C, cattle will require more energy in the ration.

For example, cold or severe winter weather will increase the energy demand of a cow with a normal body-condition score. It is necessary to supplement the diet with four to five pounds of barley grain or to increase the amount of good quality hay. Thinner cattle will require more energy, often from grain, to stay warm. This increases the total cost of winter feeding. It is important to remember that increasing the grain portion in the ration has to be done slowly to minimize the chances of rumen upset and acidosis.

Forage quality plays an important role in the winter feeding program. Lower quality forage such as straw can be fed up to a maximum of 1.25 per cent of body weight before the cow cannot adequately digest the volume of straw consumed.

During periods of severe or colder weather, cattle increase intake by up to 30 per cent. The increased energy demands are needed to stay warm, and/or to support late gestation or lactation. Increased straw consumption beyond 1.25 per cent of body weight, particularly if it has been processed, increases the risk of impaction. With proper feed management, a good quality legume and/or grass hay should be in the feed inventory. This will support late gestation, and/or lactating cows, and will provide an energy source to mitigate the effects of colder or severe weather.

Straw-based programs also require supplemental protein to ensure rumen microbial health isn't compromised by a protein deficiency.

Proper winter feeding programs should be based on a diet balanced to meet cold-weather requirements, and also include flexibility to adjust for severe winter weather. Other factors that need to be managed as part of a successful wintering program in Saskatchewan are breed, body-condition score, stage of gestation, and feed quality.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

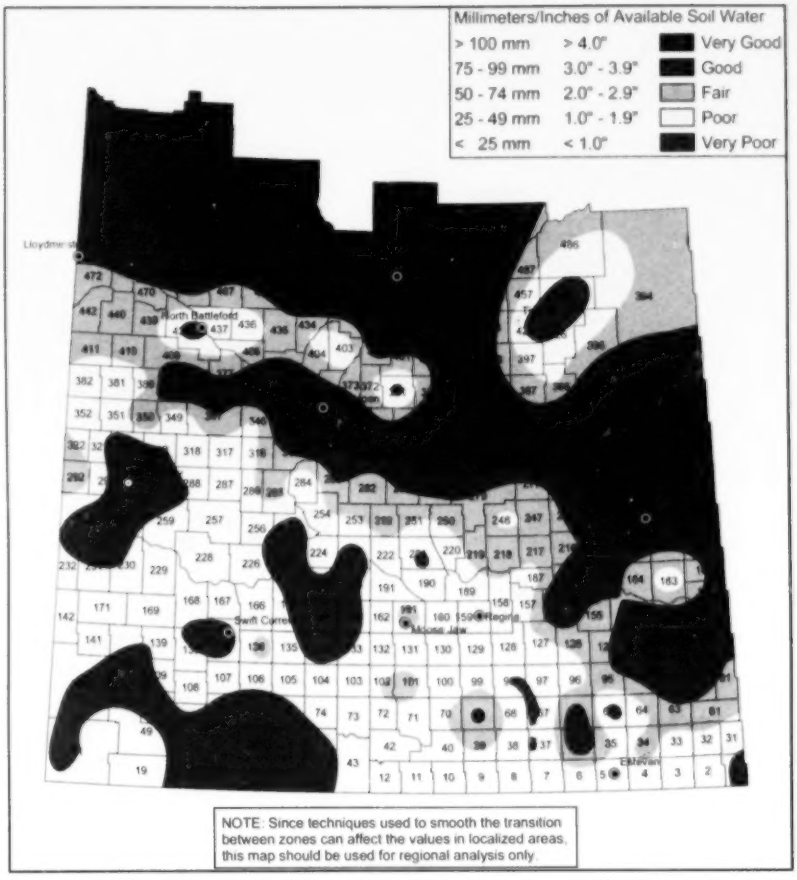
- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

by Ken Panchuk
Provincial Soils Specialist
Crop Development Branch

Most of the South West region of Saskatchewan has very poor to poor subsoil moisture going into winter, as indicated by the November 1, 2007 Stubble Subsoil Moisture Map. There are also pockets of poor subsoil moisture ratings in the regions north of the Yellowhead highway. In these northern areas, there may be unused subsoil moisture at depth because of the wetter conditions over the past couple of years. Snowmelt and spring rains are needed throughout the Brown and Dark Brown soil zones to replenish the subsoil moisture for the next growing season. As of the first week of December, there was good snow cover across most of the Saskatchewan grainbelt, providing good ground cover to prevent further loss of soil moisture, especially in the southern regions. The November 1, 2007 Stubble Subsoil Moisture Map is used for a number of purposes, such as: assisting in crop planning; determining realistic yields for nutrient planning; and forecasting spring runoff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- Visit the website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/ and click production, crops - seeding.



PRICING HAY

by André Bonneau, PAg
Forage Conversion Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

Before producers consider pricing hay for sale, the cost of producing hay should be determined.

In Saskatchewan, it is estimated that cutting and baling hay costs between $25 and $30 per ton ($27.50 and $33 per tonne). Actual hay costs can be in the range of $30 and $40/ton ($33 and $44/tonne) when the cost of establishing and maintaining the hay stand, between $5 to $10/acre ($12 to $24/ha), is included.

Production costs per ton are dependant on yields.

The type and quality of hay is a primary consideration when determining a price. If the hay is of very good or excellent quality, is there an opportunity to sell into a premium market? High quality hay can be sold for a higher price. Dairy producers, for example, are usually looking for higher quality hay. In order to obtain the maximum value for hay, test the hay for energy and protein.

When targeting a specific customer or industry, determine the quality requirements of the customer. Dairy cattle and feedlots often have different feed requirements than cow/calf or backgrounding operations. Horse owners tend to have very specific quality preferences, depending on horse breeds and use.

Price discovery is often the most difficult part of the pricing exercise. Look through local newspapers and go online to find what's available and at what price. The Saskatchewan Forage Council generates a report on its website at www.saskforage.ca, which includes price information. The Saskatchewan Agriculture website displays hay listings with the Feed Grain and Forage Listing service at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/program-services/.

The Agriculture Knowledge Centre can be contacted at 1-866-457-2377 to find comparable hay listings by area or to list feed for sale.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact André Bonneau, PAg, Forage Conversion Specialist, Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

by Andre Bonneau, PAg
Forage Conversion Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

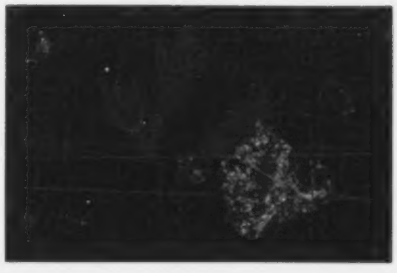
www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/program-services

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.saskforage.ca

Verified Beef Production (VBP) - Canada's beef on-farm food safety program

by Jodie Horvath
Provincial Co-ordinator, QSH/VBP



The Verified Beef Production program (VBP) is a grass-roots driven, industry-led program designed to assist producers with providing assurances of good on-farm food safety practices.

"The goal of the program is to promote the implementation of Good Production Practices on the farm that minimize beef safety risks, and to provide ongoing assurance to consumers in the global marketplace that Canadian beef is produced to the highest safety standards," said Jodie Horvath, Provincial Co-ordinator for the program in Saskatchewan. "The practices in the VBP program are part of fundamental good management."

Producers are invited to attend a free workshop where a qualified VBP trainer will explain the requirements of the program and go through the manual. Producers who attended workshops prior to September 2006 are encouraged to revisit a workshop, as the manual is updated and the program streamlined. Watch for upcoming workshop dates near your community.

Once a producer feels their records and procedures meet the requirements of the program, they can contact the Provincial Co-ordinator to arrange for an audit in order to become certified. Although it may sound intimidating, an on-farm audit is merely a check on how a beef cattle operation is applying the VBP program. The audit process is a way to meet increasing expectations from food companies and consumers, and provides authenticity for both the VBP program and for the beef producer or feedlot. It is a particularly attractive option for producers who wish to authenticate their safety practices as part of current marketing efforts.

For the Hicks family at Mortlach, getting certified was a way for them to demonstrate to their clients and peers that Bluestone Stock Farm utilizes good production practices on their operation. "We completed the audit process in the spring," Karla Hicks said. "We plan to display our sign when we show cattle this fall, as well as at our sale and here at the farm. People will recognize that we consciously apply good practices and aim to produce a safe food product."

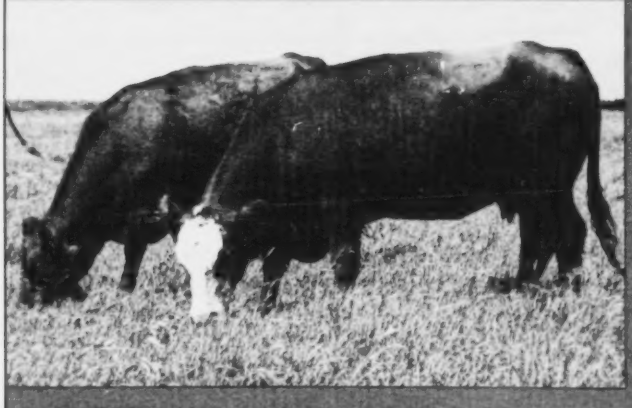
Upon successful completion of an on-farm audit, an operation is VBP registered. To maintain registration status, the operation is required to keep up records and continue to use Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

"Once a producer has met the requirements of the program, their practices become consistent and are carried out with little effort. Most people see the benefits of up to date, current records right away, as their operation becomes more efficient," Horvath said.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Jodie Horvath, Provincial Co-ordinator, at (306) 675-6177 or jhorvath@sasktel.net to request a workshop or learn more about Verified Beef Production; or
- Call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

PRE-CALVING NUTRITION OF THE BEEF COW



by Bob Klemmer, MAgr PAg
Beef-Forage Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre, SAF

Pre-calving nutrition of the beef cow can have far reaching effects on productivity. Inadequate pre-calving nutrition can reduce calf vigour, health, survivability, and calf growth performance prior to weaning. The breeding herd can also be affected by pre-calving nutrition, as reflected in post partum period and conception rates. Achieving the goal of one calf per cow per year (365 days) is highly dependant on your attention to energy, protein, mineral and vitamin nutrition, beginning with pre-calving through to the end of the breeding season.

Mid and late gestation are crucial points in the cow's yearly productive cycle for a number of reasons. Fetal growth follows an exponential curve, which means the majority of growth takes place in late pregnancy. Approximately 70 per cent of the growth of the products of pregnancy (fetus, uterine and placental tissues) take place in the last six weeks. Try to ensure the cow's body condition score is no less than 2.5 on a scale of one to five just prior to breeding, when the cow's energy, protein, mineral, and vitamin requirements are increasing. This may also be the coldest and windiest time of the winter. At the same time, rumen capacity may be dropping due to displacement caused by the growth of the uterus and fetus. We also know that nutrient demand is at its highest just following calving, so the chance of improving the cow's body condition score after calving is very slim.

Cows in poor condition and first-calf heifers are most susceptible to problems. Their body condition must be improved prior to calving if it is below 2.5. This may require separating this group from the main herd to reduce feed competition, and allowing them access to the best quality forages, minerals and vitamins, and if necessary, supplemental grain.

Due to reduced rumen capacity, and perhaps inclement weather, it's important to provide cows with good quality forage (early cut, with little weathering) six weeks pre-calving, and either reduce or eliminate straw feeding from the diet. Introducing grain to the ration prior to calving will help your cows adapt to the higher grain feeding levels necessary to maintain their body condition score and produce milk after calving.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

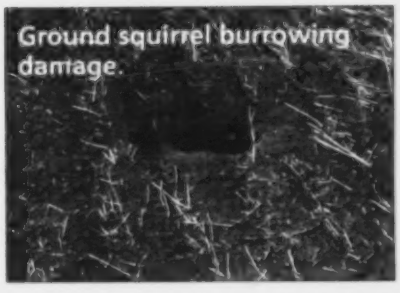
Rodenticide research for Richardson's Ground Squirrel control

by Scott Hartley
Insect Control Specialist
Crop Development Branch
and
Dr. Gilbert Proulx, Alpha Wildlife

Infestations of Richardson's ground squirrel cause damage to annual crops, forage and pasture in Western Canada on an annual basis. Management strategies must take into account the burrowing and feeding habits of this pest. Although trapping, shooting and other methods of control are utilized, poisoning is considered the most effective option. There are a number of rodenticides registered for control of ground squirrel, including strychnine (e.g. ready-to-use baits), chlorophacinone (Rozol), and aluminum phosphide fumigant (Phostoxin). However, research on the ability of these products to control Richardson's ground squirrels consistently and effectively on the Canadian Prairies is lacking.

With funding from Saskatchewan Agriculture and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), a research project was initiated for the spring of 2007 in southwest Saskatchewan. Alpha Wildlife Research and Management Ltd. conducted the research. The primary objective of this study was to assess and compare the effectiveness of aluminum phosphide fumigant tablets and various baits, including ready-to-use 0.4% strychnine-treated grains, freshly mixed 0.4% strychnine-treated grains and chlorophacinone-treated grains to kill Richardson's ground squirrels.
The project was carried out in southern Saskatchewan, in the Rural Municipalities of Mankota, Glen McPherson, and Pinto Creek, in April-May 2007, in 10 grassland study plots. The following are some preliminary observations. Results were variable between study sites and appear to be related to soil, moisture conditions and vegetation. Population densities of Richardson's ground squirrels ranged from about 10 to 68 animals per hectare.

In order to be effective, poison baits and fumigants should control at least 70% of the rodent population. In this study, none of the products provided consistently adequate control. Phostoxin ™ was the most successful, achieving about 70% control in one study site where soil conditions were adequate. However, Phostoxin was ineffective (less than 43% control) in another site where vegetation was scarce and the soil was dry. Rozol™was statistically as effective (44-55% control) as Phostoxin™, but less dangerous to use. However, in order to be efficient, Rozol™ requires multiple applications, and it may only control 50% of the population in the presence of green vegetation. Strychnine-treated baits controlled less than 50% of populations. In addition, strychnine-treated oats tend to be rejected by many Richardson's ground squirrels and represent a risk to non-target animal species.


Ground squirrel burrowing damage.

Funding is being sought to continue this study in additional years. Bringing down and maintaining populations of Richardson's ground squirrels below economic levels will require an integrated approach using a combination of rodenticides with other strategies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Scott Hartley, Insect Control Specialist, Crop Development Branch, at (306) 787-4669.

WINTER WATERING OPTIONS FOR LIVESTOCK

by Charlotte Ward, AAg
Forage Development Specialist
Livestock Development Branch

and

Bob Klemmer, PAg
Beef/Forage Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

Many livestock producers have shifted from taking the feed to the animals, and feeding in confinement for much of the winter months, to taking the animals to the feed in extensive field or pasture conditions. This shift has required a re-evaluation of winter water sources for livestock.

Snow can be effectively used as a winter water source for cattle. It is the least expensive source of water and has been shown to be successful in winter feeding programs. Research has shown that loose, clean snow can replace drinking water for both dry pregnant cows and calves, with no significant effect on production.

However, it is not instinctive for cattle to graze on snow. It is a learned behavior and it takes three to four days for cattle to adapt to eating snow. For this reason, it is important not to switch back and forth from snow to water. Those producers who would like to adapt their cows to snow grazing need to do so before severe winter weather arrives.

If a producer has been watering directly from a dugout prior to starting the cows on snow, some cows will continue to go to the dugout. Therefore, it is important to close off access to the dugout before cold weather so as to prevent accidental drowning, if cattle should break through the ice.

For snow grazing to be successful, a wind-break shelter and healthy diet with adequate energy, protein, minerals and vitamins is essential. The heat produced by the normal digestive process is adequate to melt the snow and warm it to body temperature.

Studies conducted at the University of Alberta show that some cows may make the adjustment to grazing snow without outward signs of discomfort, while others may protest. It's important to monitor the cows: they will tell the producer when things aren't just right for them.

There may be good reason for the cows to be feeling discomfort. Perhaps snow conditions have changed and there isn't enough snow, or the snow that is available may not be in good condition: it could be icy, crusted over, or wind-blown into hard drifts.

As well, there could be some physical reason explaining why some cows do not adjust well to grazing snow. These reasons could include poor health, nutritional deficiency, or body condition. Watering with snow is not recommended for lactating cows or those that are in poor condition. If snow is unavailable at a winter feeding site, other options include:

1. Hauling water daily. This is laborious, inconvenient and expensive.
2. Cutting holes in existing surface water/ice. This can be risky, and the loss of an animal through the ice is a considerable economic loss.
3. Using remote winter watering systems. These systems may be expensive to set up but provide a reliable source of water if installed and maintained properly.

Many variations to winter watering systems exist, but many producers use systems where water is pumped from a dugout or well, using wind or solar power, into a bowl or trough. If the pump is set up on a motion detector, the pump will run as long as there is motion within the range of the sensor. When animals leave the area, any water remaining in the bowl is drained to avoid freezing in the bowl. Other systems may use circulating air to prevent the water from freezing.

Water systems which take advantage of geothermal heat rising from below the frost line have also been successful. In cold weather, the float may freeze into a layer of ice which will need to be cleared daily. In properly built systems, geothermal heat will keep the supply line and bottom of the trough free of ice.

Producers who do not have a power source for their watering system may wish to explore the use of nose pumps. These use a piston pump to bring water to the surface, and the animals may need to be trained to use the nose pumps.

Whether producers rely on snow cover or implement remote watering systems, they can extend their grazing season, thereby lowering the cost of over-wintering cattle and decreasing the environmental implications of over-wintering cattle in a confined feeding yard.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Charlotte Ward, Forage Development Specialist, Outlook, at (306) 867-5559; or
- Contact Bob Klemmer, Beef/Forage Specialist, Agriculture Knowledge Centre, at 1-866-457-2377.

Harvest Photo Competition

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the SAF Harvest Photo Competition. We received 477 different photographs from 164 individuals – a response that far exceeded even our wildest expectations!

A panel of SAF staff reviewed all 477 photographs and chose the top ones based on the following criteria:

- "Action": a good photo has people or things involved in some interesting activity;
- "Background": a good photo avoids distractions in the background, like a telephone pole sticking out from behind a person's head;
- "Close": a good photo frames the key action or subject closely.

Each photo was ranked, and the points assigned to each were totalled to determine the ultimate winner in each category. The prize-winning photograph is displayed on the cover of this magazine.

The winning photographer receives a gift basket of Saskatchewan-made items valued at $150. The runner-up receives a framed, limited edition print by a Saskatchewan artist, and the second runner-up receives a Saskatchewan Agriculture fleece jacket, cap and travel mug.

The quality of the photography and the subject matter were very impressive, particularly the landscapes. Saskatchewan truly is the Land of Living Skies. We look forward to next year's competition, and we encourage all the budding photo-journalists out there to start planning next year's shots.

Well done!

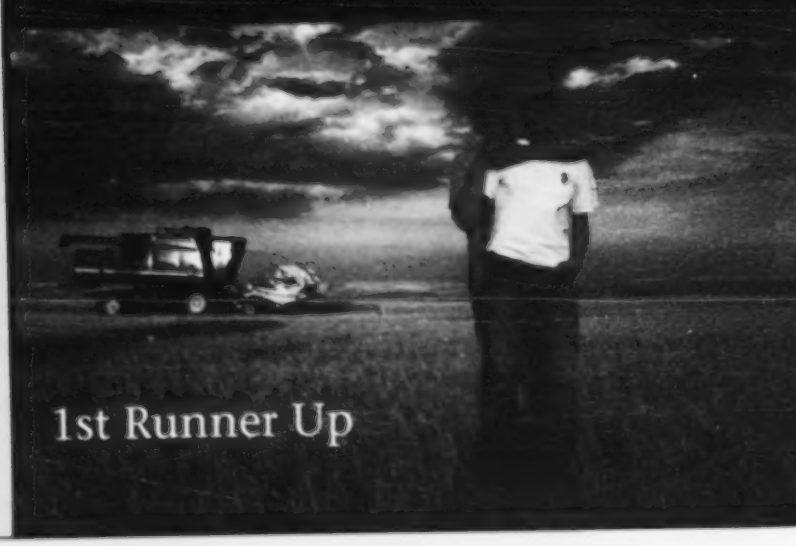
• Grand Champion •

"Change of Season" Bonnie Pototoka, Goodeve

Reserve Champion

"Onions and Garlic" Sharon Goodeve, Regina

"Sisterly Love" Heather Deobald, Saskatoon



1st Runner Up

Photo Contest 2007

Kids

First Place

"Checking Crops" Deana Mainil, Weyburn

2nd Place

"Yep! Ready to Harvest!" Amanda Waldner, Coronach

Third Place

"A Big Load For a Little Helper" Darlene Lonseth, Rocanville

Landscapes

First Place

Mike Tantarynovich, Crooked River

2nd Place

"Sunset in Congress" Cath Sinclair, Congress

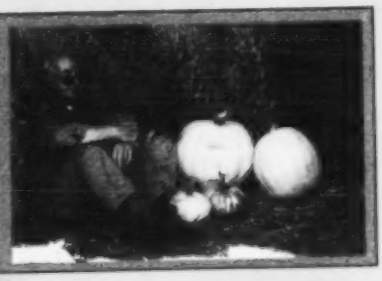
Third Place

Cheryl Pady, Edenwold

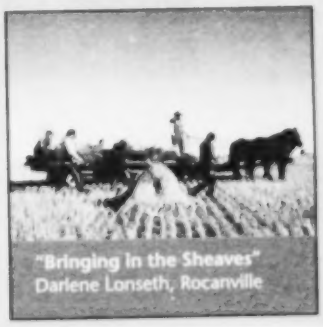
People

First Place

"Harvest at Rest" Beverly Benson, Saskatoon



2nd Place



"Bringing In the Sheaves" Darlene Lonseth, Rocanville

Third Place

"Harvest Sunset" Gloria Vogel, Weyburn

Machinery

First Place

"Now We Rest" Sharlene Stanley, Regina

2nd Place

"A Taste of the Good Old Days" Darlene Lonseth, Rocanville

Third Place

"What a View!" Nadine Robin, Meadow Lake

Harvest Photo Competition

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Well done!

"Change of Season" Bonnie Potoroka, Goodeve

"Sisterly Love"
Heather Deobald,
Saskatoon

Photo Contest 2007

Landscapes — First Place — 2nd Place — Third Place

Mike Tamarynovich, Crooked River

Crop Insurance pilots wild rice program

In 2007, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance introduced a new Wild Rice Insurance pilot program for producers. The program was highly successful, with 128 contracts registered and more than 36,000 acres insured.

The program is an area-based insurance program based on average yields in three regions in the Northern Administration District (NAD). A producer's coverage is based on the average production in each region in which they harvest. Claims are triggered when a region suffers a loss, due to an insurable cause of loss, and the region's annual production is below the historical average.

Crop Insurance staff worked closely with producers and industry representatives to design and implement the program, and learned much about the unique challenges of harvesting wild rice in the process.

Wild rice is an annual, aquatic, cross-pollinated grass native to North America. It generally grows in one metre of water, but can be found in depths up to two metres. Once wild rice plants establish, they are vulnerable to water level variation and can drown or become lodged if the water level significantly increases or decreases.

Harvest normally begins in mid-August; however, like many agricultural industries, the timing of the wild rice harvest depends on weather conditions throughout the season. This year, cool, damp weather delayed maturity of the rice in all three regions, limiting the time available to harvest the crop before freezing. The northeast continued to experience high water levels which reduced yields.

Wild rice is typically harvested using a flat bottomed aluminum boat or pontoon boat, approximately one and a half metres wide and four to six metres long. A "speedhead" is attached to the front of the air powered boat. The speedhead is comprised of a collecting tray which features PVC tubing along the front edge to strip the seed while protecting the plants, and a large screen backing to prevent seeds from blowing out. The speedhead skims above the surface of the water, striking below the heads of the rice and causing the mature seeds to fall into the collecting tray.

Wild rice seeds do not mature uniformly; the seeds at the top of the head ripen before seeds at the bottom, and seeds on the main stem mature earlier than those on the tillers. The mature seeds shatter easily, and those that are not harvested sink to the bottom of the lake to seed the next crop. Harvesting must be repeated at regular intervals throughout the harvest season to achieve maximum yields.

The boat travels across the length of the crop at approximately 16 km per hour. Once the speedhead is full, the operator drives the boat to a bagging boat, dock or shore. The crew quickly removes any foreign material before scooping the rice out of the speedhead and into bags. The entire unloading process takes just a few minutes. Most of Saskatchewan's rice is hauled daily to a buying depot or one of the province's two processing plants, located in La Ronge and Denare Beach.

The curing process begins at the processing plant, where the product is typically dumped from the bags into windrows. Stakes are placed in each windrow, indicating the date and the lake that the rice was harvested from, in order to maintain traceability for good manufacturing practices (GMP) and organic certification.

As the rice is cured, the seeds turn from greenish light brown to dark brown or black and acquire a nutty flavour. The entire process takes between four and 10 days.

Once the rice is cured, it goes through a steam chamber which moistens and heats the seeds before they enter the parching chamber. The parching process gelatinizes the starch and dries the high moisture kernel to a very hard black kernel with a glossy finish.

After parching, the rice kernels go through a hulling machine where the brittle hulls are removed, before being sorted by length and width, and bagged. Samples of each lot are collected and stored for five years to meet organic certification requirements. Much of the rice is exported to Europe.

The 25 kg bags of wild rice are sewn shut, labeled with the lot number, date and grade of the rice, and laid on pallets protected by cardboard sheets. A crew of three to four can operate the entire process, processing about one tonne of green rice per hour.

Saskatchewan's wild rice harvesters experienced their fourth consecutive year of poor production in 2007. However, the Wild Rice Insurance program will enable many harvesters in regions that experience a poor harvest to mitigate their loss and protect their investment in the future of the industry.

The development of a wild rice insurance program is an example of how the industry, individual producers and crop insurance staff worked together to provide a risk management solution for a unique but important crop in Saskatchewan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information about the Wild Rice Insurance Pilot Program, visit www.saskcropinsurance.com.

Land rental considerations

by Richard Wharton, PAg
Production Economics Specialist,

and

Ralph Howes, PAg
Production Economics Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

More than 40 per cent of Saskatchewan cropland is farmed on a rental basis. Creating equitable agreements between landlords and tenants is important for successful farming operations.

Three common land leasing arrangements on crop land are **Crop Share, Cash Rent and Flexible Cash Rent**. In all three types, the landlord provides the land, pays the taxes and may supply some or all of the grain storage. The tenant pays the operating expenses, and supplies labour and machinery to farm the land. The division of income varies with the type of leasing agreement.

The **Crop Share** traditional division of one-third share of all crop sales to the landlord and two-thirds share to the tenant had been based on one-half crop fallow and cereal production only. Continuous cropping, specialty crops and high input costs are resulting in modification of this ratio, or a sharing of the inputs in the same ratio as crop division (see example 1).

For **Cash Rental** arrangements, the tenant receives the income from all crop sales but pays the landlord a fixed dollar amount each year as the rent. Both production risk and market risk are carried by the tenant. The rent may be paid in advance, semi-annually, or as agreed to by both parties.

In the **Flexible Cash Rent**, the tenant receives all the income from the crop sales, but the dollar amount paid to the landlord each year varies with either the price of grain or yield of grain, or both price and yield. The Flexible Cash Rent incorporates features of the Crop Share and Cash Rent leases (example 2). Production risk is carried by the tenant in this case, while market risk is shared.

Rental Rates

Rental rates are largely established by market forces, that is, the supply of and demand for rental land in a district. Landlords and tenants, through a process of negotiation, can establish rental rates and conditions of a lease. Tradition has an influence on rents, particularly for crop share leases. Prior to entering into a lease, both parties should carefully prepare financial projections to estimate the financial returns. Often tenants must pay the going rental rate in an area (market rate) or they will not obtain a lease. Be sure the market rate will adequately cover the costs and yield a reasonable return to labour and inputs.

Contribution Approach

One of the financial planning techniques that is useful to determine rental rates is the **contribution approach**. This budgeting method can be used to test the fairness of a lease agreement. This approach simply means that "each party to an arrangement should share the income from the land in the same proportion as they contribute to the costs." Other things being equal, a tenant should receive a larger share if he contributes more in the way of crop inputs, machinery, labour, or accepts a larger risk. By the same token, a landlord should receive a larger rent for more productive, and higher valued land.

Example 1: Contributions Approach Dark Brown Soil Zone 2007, Spring Wheat

Tenant's Costs per Cultivated Acre		Landlord's Costs per Cultivated Acre	
Cropping Costs (100%)(seed/fertilizer/pesticides)		Land	
Machinery		Investment ($341 x 5%)	$17.05
Fuel and Repairs	$17.98	Taxes	5.54
Investment and Deprec.	26.22	Buildings (grain storage)	
Buildings		**Landlord's Total Cost**	**$25.43**
Buildings (machine storage)	8.38		
Business Overhead (Insurance, utilities, misc.)			
Labour	15.00		
Tenant's Total Cost	**$131.53**		

Total Contributions $131.53 + $25.43 = 156.96
Tenant's Share = $\frac{131.53 \times 100}{156.96}$ = **84%**
Landlord's Share = $\frac{25.43 \times 100}{156.96}$ = **16%**

Example 2: Flexible Cash Rent

Bushel Equivalent	Price of ref. crop	Rent / acre
5	$3.00	$15.00
5	3.50	17.50
5	4.00	20.00
5	4.50	22.50
5	5.00	25.00

Flexible Cash Rent

With changing crop and input prices, landlords and tenants are searching for ways to establish a fair rent. Flexible cash rent is an option that allows both parties to share in price fluctuations. Rental prices can be tied to crop price. For example: if rent has been $20 per acre with #1 CWRS at $4 per bushel, this would be the equivalent of five bushels of wheat per acre. The above chart shows how the value of rent would change as wheat price changes. (Wheat is recommended even if it is not in the rotation, because price quotes are readily available.) Be sure to designate a grade, date, and delivery point to be clear on the value to use. The average CWB PRO for September, October and November minus freight, elevation and handling would be a good price to use as a base.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/management/business_arrangements; or
- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- Contact a Business Planning Specialist at your nearest SAF Regional Office.

INTEREST REBATE AVAILABLE TO FEEDER ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

by Mark Folk, Manager
Financial Programs Branch

Saskatchewan Agriculture, through the Livestock Loan Guarantee (LLG) Program, has signed on to deliver the Interest Rebate portion of the Advance Payments Program (APP) on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. APP provides interest savings on the first $100,000 of advances taken on any combination of commodities. (For more details, visit www.agr.gc.ca/prog/app/). LLG will be administering this interest rebate portion of the APP through the 101 feeder associations located throughout the province.

Applications will be available to feeder association members from their co-op. Completed applications will then be sent to the LLG office for the final approval process. After a member has paid out his/her advance from the association (including interest), a request for payment will be submitted by the LLG administrators to the APP. Upon receipt of the rebate, the LLG program will forward this rebate to the associations for distribution to the eligible members.

The LLG program provides producers with the opportunity to retain their calves by way of an advance through the feeder option. The advance, provided through the association, can be taken for the market value of the calves, and is required to be repaid within one year. With the announcement of an interest rebate portion of the APP in Saskatchewan, these feeder advances through the LLG program will now be eligible for an interest rebate. A significant portion of the interest could be rebated on eligible advances. This program will allow producers to retain their calves or buy feeders, and have additional marketing options by reducing the interest costs of carrying the animals.

The LLG program was established in 1984. It facilitates the development of associations which allow producers access to funding for the purchase of feeder cattle on the strength of a government guarantee to the lender. The program has expanded to include breeder cattle, sheep, bison, an individual feeder option and an option for feedlot construction or expansion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Livestock Loan Guarantee Program at (306) 787-5275 in Regina or (306) 933-5745 in Saskatoon; or
- Visit us online at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

"People have a tendency to look over the fence and just do what the neighbour is doing. That might not help your operation, because not everyone comes into this race from the same place."

Perry Johnson
Trickle Down Farming Inc.

Managing risk, planning for success with the help of Specialized Business Planning Services

by Jan Cote, Regional Communications Advisor Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

"The longer I'm at this, the more I see that farming is about management—risk management especially," said Perry Johnson, owner of Trickle Down Farming Inc., a grain and cattle operation at Young, Saskatchewan. Johnson chose the name of his farm because he wanted to challenge the idea of farmers being at the bottom end of the economic spectrum. He views the success of his farming operation as a contributor to the success of the other suppliers, businesses and employees around him.

Johnson has used business planning tools for years. When he heard about the Specialized Business Planning Services (SBPS) available through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services, he was intrigued. SBPS can provide up to 50 per cent of the costs for an approved consultant to prepare succession plans, feasibility assessments, or specialized business plans on expansion, marketing, or utilizing human resources. Johnson first called on SBPS for planning assistance to operate through a cash flow crisis, but since then, he's called on additional expertise to reach his goal of expanding by 10 per cent each year.

Although it hasn't really changed his production techniques, having an advisor to call on has made a difference in his management style. "In farming, it's not so much what you do right, it's the pitfalls you avoid," Johnson said. He strives for low current liabilities and keeps a close eye on his operating loan.

He's also careful about which crops he grows and how they're handled. "Just growing feed wheat—nobody can make that work anymore," he said. "We need to do everything we can to market a quality product." To maintain the quality of his harvested crops, Johnson keeps up to 70 per cent of his expected harvest in aerated storage. "Quality has to be the priority," he said. "For the price of a new half-ton, I was able to install enough aeration equipment to make a long-term investment in my crop quality for years to come."

> "The longer I'm at this, the more I see that farming is about management - risk management especially"
>
> Perry Johnson

As well, he books the custom combine outfit he works with well in advance to ensure he'll have adequate early-season capacity during the hectic harvest time crunch.

"This experience has helped me see that everybody has their own unique set of problems," Johnson said. "People have a tendency to look over the fence and just do what the neighbour is doing. That might not help your operation, because not everyone comes into this race from the same place."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services at 1-866-452-5558 or see www.agr.gc.ca/Programs and Services/Specialized Business Planning Services ; or
- Contact Lyle Stavness, Farm Business Management Services, Agri-Business Development Branch, at (306) 787-4323.

HOW DOES SBPS WORK?

Any farmer who does at least $10,000 of annual gross sales—or expects to as a beginning farmer—can apply for Specialized Business Planning Services.

Groups can also apply. Each group member must represent a separate farm business and must be an established or beginning farmer. Partnerships, corporations and co-operatives are also eligible to apply as single entities if they generate at least $10,000 in annual gross farm sales.

STEP 1
Contact a SBPS program officer for program details and application.

STEP 2
They will help you identify what to look for in choosing a consultant, and which business plan elements should be included in your plan.

STEP 3
Complete the application and submit it along with the required consultant's proposal and fee schedule. You must wait for approval from AAFC before work can begin.

STEP 4
Sign and return the terms and conditions for the SBPS funds. Then work with your consultant on your plan until complete. Partial payments to the consultant are allowed.

STEP 5
When your plan is complete, submit the finished plan and the invoice to AAFC. The program officer will review the plan and consult with you in the approval stage.

STEP 6
Upon approval, you then pay the consultant in full and AAFC reimburses you their 50 per cent.

EFP review and update

by Bill Henley
Manager, Environmental Programming
Policy Branch

Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) are voluntary, confidential self-assessment tools used by producers to raise awareness of environmental risks and opportunities on their operations. As part of the EFP process, producers develop their own action plans to identify management practices that help reduce environmental risk on their farms.

The EFPs are delivered through two training workshops, followed by a peer review process. Trained facilitators deliver the workshops, guiding producers through an EFP workbook and the development of their own Environmental Farm Action Plans (EFAP). EFP workshops are available to all Saskatchewan agriculture producers at no charge. The length of each workshop is approximately four hours; completion of the risk self-assessment and development of the action plan takes another four to eight hours.

At the introductory workshop, producers receive an EFP binder and instructions on how to complete the self-assessment at home. Producers can then attend the second workshop (usually scheduled one to two weeks after the first workshop), which focuses on the development of the Environmental Farm Action Plan (EFAP). Once the action plan is completed, producers may choose to have it anonymously reviewed by a peer review committee. Once an action plan is endorsed by the peer review committee, the producer qualifies for cost-shared funding, which will pay 30 to 50 per cent of the total cost, to implement changes known as Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the action plan.

The Provincial Council of Agriculture Development and Diversification (ADD) Boards (PCAB) delivers the EFP program in Saskatchewan. When it first started in the fall of 2004, PCAB set a goal of having 6,500 endorsed EFPs by the time the current agreement expires on March 31, 2008.

In their words, producer participation in this program has been "nothing short of amazing." Since the program started, over 12,000 farm units have participated in Workshop 1 and almost 9,000 farm units have participated in Workshop 2. As of October 26, 2007, 8,633 EFPs have been completed in Saskatchewan. The incentive program called the National Farm Stewardship Program, which is administered by PFRA, has paid out more than $12 million so far, which means producers have easily spent twice this amount or more of their own money to implement environmentally beneficial management practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact PCAB at 1-866-298-7222; or
- Go to www.saskpcab.com and follow the links to EFP; or
- Contact bhenley@agr.gov.sk.ca.

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLANS IN THE SASKATCHEWAN PASTURES PROGRAM (SPP)

by Don Fontaine, PAg
Team Leader, Resource Management
Lands Branch

Many agricultural producers have completed or will soon be completing Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) to assess environmental risks on their farms. While Saskatchewan's community pastures may not be considered traditional farm operations, they have many of the same environmental opportunities and risks. Consequently, the Saskatchewan Pastures Program (SPP) decided to complete EFPs for all of its community pastures in the province.

The Saskatchewan Pastures Program supports maintaining natural biodiversity and preserving healthy soil and water resources in its pastures. These conditions are required for the health and well-being of the livestock in the pastures, as well as for the environment. Extensively grazing cattle on pasture is probably one of the least intrusive agricultural activities; nevertheless, there is always an impact, and the objective is always to minimize the "environmental footprint" of human activity.

The goal of the EFP is to identify risks to the environment, and develop a practical plan to reduce those risks.

To date, nearly all community pasture managers have attended the EFP workshops and completed an EFP for their pasture(s). By attending the workshops and completing the EFP, pasture managers were able to assess their pastures for potential environmental threats, and find solutions to mitigate these threats. For example, on some pastures with fragile soil, underground water lines have been installed to provide remote watering sites. In other areas, access by cattle to riparian areas has been restricted to minimize their impact on those areas.

Today's public is very concerned about water quality, food safety and the environment. The EFP is a tool which can further reassure the public that our community pastures are valuable resources that are being well managed. Pasture managers have assessed the risks on their pastures and taken steps to remediate, where required.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For information on completing an EFP, contact the Provincial Council of ADD Boards, (306) 955-5477; or
- Contact Saskatchewan Agriculture's Lands Branch at (306) 787-5322.

Biosecurity – are your livestock protected from the threat of disease?

by Dr. Mary VanderKop
Disease Surveillance Veterinarian
Animal Health Unit, Inspection and Regulatory Management

Livestock diseases such as foot and mouth in the U.K. and avian influenza in Saskatchewan have made biosecurity a household word, but how do you apply it on your farm? It is a cornerstone of On-Farm Food Safety programs, and is critical to protect the financial investment in your livestock.

Biosecurity is how you separate your animals from anyone or anything that could carry disease.

Consider these questions. Who is allowed access into your poultry barn? Can you recall who visited in the last week, in the last month? Do you borrow machinery from your neighbour to work in your corrals? Do you bring new heifers into your herd without knowledge of their disease status? Do wild birds or the farm cats get into your barns? Any of these could place your livestock investment at risk.

Biosecurity is about protection. All aspects of your farming operation, including livestock handling, identification, disinfection protocols, disease recognition and reporting and movement control, contribute to keeping your livestock safe.

A biosecure farm has defined zones to separate the livestock from traffic of people, vehicles or equipment – especially from other farms. You have the right to control which areas on your farm are accessible. Keep these points in mind.

- Traffic control is critical.
  - Stop visitors at your gate with a bold sign.
  - Indicate a specific parking area well away from livestock.
  - Direct people to report to your farm office or house so that they don't wander through the farm yard or barns.
    - Keep a log of visitors in your office.
  - Record who came to the farm and when, as well as what previous farms they had visited that day.
  - Consider locking the barns when you are not inside.
  - Provide clean protective clothing and footwear for visitors.
  - Wash and disinfect equipment that enters the barns or livestock area.
  - Secure barns to prevent wild birds or pests from entering. Keep pets out.
  - Quarantine new livestock before adding them to the herd.
  - Monitor the health of your herd and seek veterinary advice quickly if a problem occurs.
  - Keep livestock areas clean and free of debris that can harbour vermin.
  - Purchase livestock, feed and supplies from reliable sources that practice strict biosecurity.

The full scope of biosecurity is beyond a brief article. Your industry association can provide more information. It remains important that you keep security in mind and do your part to protect your herd or flock. By doing so, you help protect your industry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Animal Health Unit, Saskatchewan Agriculture at (306) 787-2150.

ORGANIC RESEARCH WORKSHOP

by Mike McAvoy
Manager, Crop Development Branch

The Saskatchewan Organic Research Workshop, originally scheduled for November 16, 2007, was postponed and is now re-scheduled for February 8, 2008. The workshop will provide an overview of the research capability that exists for organics in the province, as well as presentations by scientists. It will host a full lineup of researchers presenting on some of the work they do related to organic production. Presentations will cover agronomics, crop breeding and livestock related research. One of the main attractions of the workshop will be the panel discussion where organic producers will have the opportunity to ask scientists about research projects, provide comments and talk about future research needs. Scientists from the University of Saskatchewan, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada will be participants with us in the workshop.

The workshop will be held in Saskatoon at the Saskatoon Inn (Canadian Room) on February 8, 2008 with registration starting at 9:30 a.m. and presentations beginning at 10:00 a.m. The workshop should conclude around 4:00 p.m. To assist in making arrangements for the facility and lunch, participants are requested to pre-register by February 1, 2008. To register, please call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377. There will be no fee for the workshop.

Saskatchewan Agriculture is looking forward to a good turn out from the organic sector and our research institutions for a full day of exploring current and future organic research.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Daphne Gottselig at the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- Visit our website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca under the Calendar of Events.

An easy approach to enhance business development

by Leroy Bader, PAg
Agri-Business Development Specialist,
Agri-Business Development Branch

The establishment and operation of a business is a process or cycle that goes through a number of stages, as was mentioned in a previous month's feature on business development. Process facilitation can help you work through processes to achieve your vision in a strategic manner.

Typically, when you work on a project, you go through stages referred to as forming, storming, norming, and performing. One of the more difficult aspects is the storming phase, which requires clarifying the purpose, mandate and individual roles. After the storming phase, the project gains clarity, and it becomes possible to work towards the project goals as a fully performing group.

A key role for any business development process is to identify the vision and develop an action plan. Visions and goals can be shifting targets - the process is dynamic to accommodate changes which may occur.

An example of strategic planning which brings structure and results to your agri-business project includes:

- Practical vision: Focuses on where you want to be in the future
- Underlying obstacles: Identifies what is standing in your way
- Strategic direction: Proposes strategies to deal with obstacles
- Action plan: Identifies actions to implement the vision

Facilitation skills can come from within the group, or an outside facilitator may provide guidance and keep the process and discussions moving. Using an outside facilitator may be warranted, depending on the complexity of the situation and the group's needs.

Facilitation skills can be useful in planning meetings or conferences, developing action plans for specific projects, or developing multi-year strategic plans. If you need assistance in business development, Saskatchewan Agriculture's Agri-Business Development Specialists can work with you and help you determine a process that suits your needs. Contact a member of our regional office if you'd like to learn more about agri-business development and how our team can help you facilitate the development of your project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Leroy Bader at (306) 878-8841; or lbader@agr.gov.sk.ca; or
- Visit our website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Development/Business - Planning.

EVALUATING THE OPPORTUNITY

by John Ippolito
Agri-Business Development Specialist,
Agri-Business Development Branch

The all-important first phase of the business development cycle is the evaluation of the opportunity.
A pre-feasibility study is a preliminary analysis of a venture or idea. It may require a couple of days of work to put together. This preliminary analysis sorts out those ideas that are worthy of further research from those that are unworthy and can be abandoned. For those ideas deemed worthy of further exploration, the information used in the initial analysis is brought into the next phase of business planning (i.e. the formal evaluation of the opportunity).

The basic approach at the pre-feasibility stage of the evaluation is to gather external data such as market and competitor information. Some of the necessary information can be found in written materials such as the news media, or trade and statistical publications. Another source of information may be interviews with people already in the industry.

During this stage of the analysis, the proposed idea should be tested against the following criteria:

- **Product:**
  - What is your product or service?
  - Do you have the capabilities to produce it?
- **Customers:**
  - Who are your customers?
  - Where is the product to be sold?
  - What is the current state of the market for your product or service?
- **Advantage:**
  - What is the advantage or benefit that you can provide your customers?
  - Will it be easy to enter the market, and what do you know about the competition?
  - Does the product build upon core competencies?
- **Business model:**
  - What is the cost to launch the business?
  - What volumes are required?
  - What weaknesses or risks have been identified?

The answers to these questions will help you decide whether you want to proceed to a detailed feasibility study, modify the idea or abandon the idea altogether. It's important to note that, at this stage, there has not been any analysis of the profitability of the idea or the costs of development. These would be carried out if you decide to continue with the idea and explore its feasibility in more detail.

Agri-Business Development Specialists with Saskatchewan Agriculture can provide a great deal of assistance in evaluating the opportunities. They can assist in acquiring the appropriate statistical and trade information, as well as provide important links to industry expertise.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact your Saskatchewan Agriculture regional office; or
- Visit www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Development/Business - Planning.

Saskatchewan meat cutters in demand!

by Rachel Kraynick
Agri-Business Development Specialist
Agri-Business Development Branch

Over the past several months, Saskatchewan Agriculture's Agri-Business Development Specialists met with regional agri-businesses to learn about common business constraints and opportunities within various industry sectors. During these meetings, business owners identified the shortage of qualified meat cutters as one of their top areas of concern.

"Saskatchewan is not unique in our shortage of skilled labour or ability to attract young people to this industry," President of the Saskatchewan Meat Processors Association (SMPA) Paul Rogers states. "The SMPA along with other provincial associations and government bodies are working on strategies that will make young people aware of the career opportunities in the meat industry."

This labour shortage creates an opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan who want to become employed in the meat industry. In discussions with SIAST, home of the applied certificate meat cutting program, graduates are in high demand, and many secure employment prior to their graduation. "SIAST students have an advantage when they walk out the door," Retail Meat Cutting program head Adrian Kristoff says. "They have the precise skills and business knowledge required to optimize and market products for any retail meat business."

Retail Meat Cutting applied certificate program and Meat Processing courses through SIAST:

Retail Meat Cutting is a 22-week applied program which combines hands-on training and a four-week practicum in order for students to work in state-of-the-art meat cutting facilities. Graduates are prepared for the retail and wholesale meat cutting industries. They may start their own butcher shops, or become employed as meat cutters or meat managers in processing plants, supermarkets, institutions, sales or with the government inspections branch.

Meat Processing is an 18-week certificate program which provides training in making sausage, smoking and curing meats. Using the latest technologies, students develop the skills required by the processing industry. Students produce many varieties of sausages, loaves, hams and bacon and learn merchandising techniques used in a delicatessen. Graduates may find employment in processing plants, commercial sausage kitchens or retail meat markets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information on these SIAST programs, call Adrian Kristoff, program head, at 933-6398; or
- Visit www.goSIAST.com.

'OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!' AGRI-BUSINESS CONFERENCE

by Jason Wood, Agri-Business Development Specialist
Agri-Business Development Branch

Mark your calendars for the second annual "Opportunity Knocks!" Agri-Business Conference, scheduled for January 30, 2008 at the Gold Ridge Centre in North Battleford. This conference is jointly planned and sponsored by Saskatchewan Agriculture, Saskatchewan Enterprise and Innovation and the Battlefords Innovation Credit Union.

Rural and urban administrators, councillors, economic development officers, agricultural entrepreneurs and producers considering opportunities in existing or new markets are invited to attend this exciting event. This one day event will present very useful information and is an ideal opportunity to meet and build relationships with economic development professionals, industry and research experts, government representatives and business owners/entrepreneurs.

The keynote speaker will be Doug Elliott of QED Information Systems and publisher of the "Sask Trends Monitor" monthly newsletter. Elliott, a prominent analyst on provincial issues, will present an overview of current social, demographic and economic trends in the northwest region and how agriculture fits into the picture.

Another presentation will focus on possible solutions to issues in the northwest region. Participants will receive an introduction to immigration in the region, how to develop co-operatives, options available to address challenges that may arise when starting or expanding a business, as well as the opportunities available to First Nations and other groups.

The conference will address five niche areas of agribusiness – agri-tourism, biofibre, biofuel, organics and fruit – including an overview of the industry; key players and examples of success; constraints to development and possible solutions; as well as program support and funding options. Technical experts will share their knowledge on these niche areas and will be available to answer your questions.

Saskatchewan Agriculture has a team of specialists in nine regional offices available to work with individuals and communities interested in building on opportunities for agriculturally based economic development in their region. Consistent with the conference theme of exploring opportunities, this team of specialists understands the importance of working with new and existing agri-businesses to grow the economy. Saskatchewan Agriculture is here to help agri-business through the business development process and to build on the kinds of opportunities that are available locally in your region. To explore opportunities in your region, please contact one of our local specialists.

Registration for the "Opportunity Knocks!" Agri-Business Conference is $20.00 (lunch included). Advanced registration is preferred.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Saskatchewan Agriculture's Regional Office in North Battleford at (306) 446-7964; or
- E-mail Jason Wood at jwood@agr.gov.sk.ca.

Lily Plain Summer breaks into the luxury food market

by Catherine Folkersen
Manager, Food Industry Development
Market Development and Food Branch

Marie Symes Grehan, owner and operator of Lily Plain Summer in Prince Albert, is passionate about the quality of wild fruit and herbs that grow in northern Saskatchewan, and has made it her mission to capture the value of these exceptional ingredients.

The company has started to take off. Recently, Grehan met with an American luxury food chain. It does not matter to them that Lily Plain Summer cannot produce truckloads of product or that her price cannot compete with mass-produced commercial jams. The company was looking for specialty foods that stand above the rest. They knew instantly that Lily Plain's products were unique, delicious and very marketable.

Other buyers have equally enthusiastic praise for Lily Plain Summer products. Joline Brewster, owner of the Banff boutique shop Natur'el, serves Lily Plain wild rose petal or wild chokecherry jam on the scones in her tea room. Her international clientele are looking for organic, natural products that are totally unique. Brewster offers only one line in each retail category in her shop, and Lily Plain is her choice for preserves.

"The flavour in the jams is phenomenal. Lily Plain uses berries that I have only ever seen in the wild," Brewster says. "All our products are made by Canadian designers or artisans. We share the heritage of our country through the products we offer."

Grehan credits her success to her business philosophy and relationships. Her company has taken the time to build relationships with the people she works with – both suppliers and buyers. She offers premium prices for her ingredients, knowing that, if people in the harvesting chain were not paid fairly for their work, then they would not be there for her in coming years.

One of Grehan's long-term relationships has been with the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. in Saskatoon because it offers small companies access to expertise on food processing and training, and to a facility to produce her products, her way. Lily

Plain Summer continues to use the centre in the development of new projects that use other northern wild foods.

Grehan is determined to make her jams more than just a bread spread. Since berries have traditionally been served with meat – turkey with cranberries, pork with applesauce, duck with orange – Grehan has created conserves to pair with meats, pates and cheeses, all foods that cost more than bread. This reinforces the association of her products with luxury foods.

In summary, Lily Plain is more about life than about branding.

"We care about our relationships," says Grehan. "Lily Plain Summer truly lives the value chain concept. Value at every step in the chain rewards all members of the chain and provides the customer with the authentic luxury experience that they are seeking – and the premium is captured."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Lily Plain Summer at (306) 763-3947; or
- Contact the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. at (306) 933-7555.

THE REGINA REGIONAL OFFICE OF SASKATCHEWAN AGRICULTURE HAS MOVED TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Walter Scott Building 3085 Albert Street, Regina, SK., S4S 0B1
Phone: 787-9773
Fax: 787-9623

Our regional development team consists of:

Francine Morley, Agri-Business Development Specialist	787-8792
Dale Weisbrot, Forage Development Specialist	787-9476
Adrienne Hanson, Livestock Development Specialist (Weyburn)	848-2380
Elaine Moats, Crop Development Specialist (Weyburn)	848-2856
Gerry Holland, Business Planning Specialist	787-4051
Valerie Leier, Regional Office Administrator	787-9773
Elke Halbgewachs, Administrative Support	787-8303

Sleepless in Saskatchewan, back by popular demand!

The Farm Stress Line, in partnership with Saskatchewan's Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, is once again sponsoring Sleepless in Saskatchewan with Jon Shearer. Evening presentations will take place in six communities in the province. "These presentations proved to be very popular this past year," said Ken Imhoff, Manager of Saskatchewan's Farm Stress Line. Those who attended and answered the question "What would you do to improve Sleepless in Saskatchewan," said: "Jon was awesome; keep Jon as a speaker; very entertaining; very good presentation; very informative; great advice; so good to laugh."

Jon Shearer has been involved in sleep research since 1977. He was a founding member of the Carlton University Laboratory for Sleep and Chronopsychology and has been involved in numerous studies, having published over 25 articles on the subject. He has served as an expert witness in a number of shift-work arbitrations. Jon is noted for bringing humour to the subject. "He is a motivational speaker with content," said Imhoff. "He brings real understanding to the importance of sleep and practical ways of increasing your sleep efficiency."

From the point of view of farming and ranching today, we know that sleep is often compromised. Many farm and ranch families are faced with off-farm work to keep the operation going. This means that farm and ranch activity, the business of agriculture, takes place on the evening and on weekends. Sleep is further compromised during calving, seeding, haying and harvest. Jon Shearer's approach is very practical. He speaks of sleep efficiency, focusing on getting the best sleep in whatever time is available.

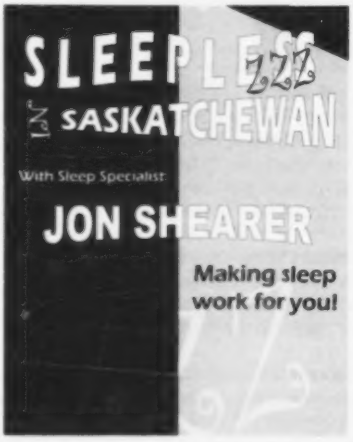
Watch for Sleepless in Saskatchewan in the following communities:

February 5th, 2008 - evening workshop in Whitewood
February 8th, 2008 - evening workshop in Hafford
February 26th, 2008 - evening workshop in Moose Jaw
February 27th, 2008 - evening workshop in Eatonia
February 28th, 2008 - evening workshop in Fox Valley

Three workshops are still to be arranged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call Connections toll-free 1-866-680-0006 or the Farm Stress Line at 1-800-667-4442, or e-mail kimhoff@agr.gov.sk.ca.



CHRISTMAS SEASON HOURS FOR THE FARM STRESS LINE

As we approach the Christmas season and the end of 2007, we reflect on the year that has just passed and the new year to come. Christmas provides us an opportunity to greet and host family, friends and neighbours.

Each year has its challenges and successes. The challenges and successes differ from person to person, from farm and ranch enterprise to farm and ranch enterprise. This year, the harvest was great for some and difficult for others. Grain producers may reflect on higher prices, whereas livestock producers may reflect on lower returns. But as one reflects on how things turned out on one's farm or ranch, we would hope that each one counts their personal blessings such as family, friends and neighbours.

Christmas is an opportunity to connect, which means appreciating family, friends and neighbours, and an opportunity to connect with those who may be alone and isolated. Reaching out can be rewarding, not only to others, but also to ourselves.

For those who feel isolated, there is the Farm Stress Line. It's a peer-to-peer toll-free telephone service, which means you are talking to someone who knows what it's like to live in today's farming and ranching world. We are people who understand rural life.

The Farm Stress Line will maintain normal hours of operation, Monday to Saturday — 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, we will be open 8:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m., and will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

In the spirit of the season, the staff of the Farm Stress Line wish everyone peace and fellowship.

2007 - A tough year for Saskatchewan honey producers

by John Gruszka
Provincial Apiculture Development Specialist
Crop Development Branch

In 2006, Saskatchewan beekeepers produced a record honey crop of 25 million pounds. Unfortunately, the 2007 honey crop is expected to be considerably lower, perhaps by 10 million pounds.

The problems began in the spring with higher than normal colony losses over the winter (23 per cent versus an average of 15 per cent). The cold, wet spring hampered beekeepers' attempts to build up colony populations and start new colonies from the survivors. During June, the wet weather continued in the northern grain belt, where 75 per cent of the province's hives are kept. Inclement weather impeded the bees' ability to forage for food resources.

The extreme heat in July severely reduced the honey flow from canola, whereas the cold, wet weather in August prevented any further honey production from alfalfa and clover crops.

Winter hive mortality was worse in other regions of Canada compared to Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association queen breeding project, "Saskatraz," has been providing mite-resistant stock to beekeepers around the province for the past four years, helping to minimize mite problems and winter losses. Saskatraz has had major funding from Saskatchewan Agriculture's Agriculture Development Fund, and recently from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to improve on and distribute the stock for another three years.

In the United States, an estimated 600,000, or 25 per cent of the colonies, perished during the winter of 2006-07. The losses are attributed to Colony Collapse Disorder, which appears to be caused by a variety of stress related abnormalities in the hives. Most of the losses occurred in mobile commercial honey and pollination operations which migrate across the U.S. to pollinate food crops. Many of these operations suffered in excess of 50 per cent winter losses. Beekeepers attempted to rebuild their colony numbers during the summer of 2007, but due to extreme weather in most of the honey producing states (some extremely dry and others flooded), the U.S. honey crop is anticipated to be the worst in over 20 years.

The North American honey industry is hoping that the severe reduction in honey production will be accompanied by a rise in world honey prices in the coming months to offset the poor yield in 2007 (and poor prices in 2006).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact John Gruszka, Provincial Apiculture Development Specialist at (306) 953-2790.

MAKE THE HOLIDAY SPECIAL BY PICKING A LOCALLY GROWN CHRISTMAS TREE OR POINSETTIA

by Glen Sweetman
Provincial Specialist – Greenhouse and Nursery Crops
Crop Development Branch

Saskatchewan's Christmas tree and poinsettia growers work hard to bring special warmth to your holiday season. The family gathering around the Christmas tree with the poinsettia on the table is a long-standing holiday tradition.

Many Saskatchewan families enjoy the beauty, warmth and fragrance provided by a real tree. Increasingly, they are discovering that trees grown and harvested in our cold environment last longer and are more fragrant. Prairie-grown trees are available at many urban tree lots. There are about 20 Christmas tree growers in the province. Some sell through urban tree lots, some have their own lots and some sell through "choose and cut" operations, where families can make an outing of picking their own tree and enjoy the hospitality of the grower.

The plant we know today as the poinsettia has a long and interesting history. Native to the highlands of Central America, where it blooms during the short days of winter, the plant was called cuetlaxochitl by the Aztecs. In Mexico, it is also known as Flores de Noche Buena, or Flowers of the Holy Night, because it blooms during the Christmas season. It has become one of the most popular seasonal decorative plants in the world.

There are numerous options available when choosing a poinsettia to provide a beautiful addition to your holiday decor. Saskatchewan growers are able to produce poinsettias ranging from the traditional red, to creamy white, to shades of pink and orange and even speckled or marbled patterns. Saskatchewan-grown poinsettias can be found in retail outlets as well as in the growers' own outlets.

Consider purchasing a locally grown Christmas tree and poinsettia this year. In addition to supporting a local producer and a local industry,

you can also ask the grower for tips on keeping your tree or poinsettia fresh and decorative throughout the festive season.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For a list of your local Christmas tree or poinsettia producers, contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- If you are interested in becoming a Christmas tree or poinsettia producer, contact Glen Sweetman, Provincial Specialist, Greenhouse and Nursery Crops, at (306) 787-6606.

Organics is "in" in the bird food industry

by Ken Evans
Agri-Business Development Specialist
Agri-Business Development Branch

Harvest Sun Organic Seeds Ltd. is a family-owned and operated business in Estevan, which is providing high quality, certified organic birdseed blends to the world.

Every package of Harvest Sun's Certified Organic Birdseed blend has a unique lot number. This number allows the seed to be traced back to the specific field where it was grown and to the farmer who grew it.

Harvest Sun has released three special blended organic birdseed products for canaries, budgies and finches. Ingredients for those products include a mixture of organic canary seed, millet, flax and oat groats. Products come in three different sizes: 680 grams (1.5 lb.); 4.54 kilograms (10 lb.); and 11.36 kg (25 lb.). Freshness is maintained by packaging the seeds in a recloseable, handi-grip jar without the use of preservatives and additives.

Blackburn has spent many years developing and refining the company's products, packaging, and company's production facilities. Through this development process, Blackburn has called upon the expertise and advice of many service providers, including the regional staff with Saskatchewan Agriculture. Blackburn has also attended some value chain workshops in the past in his quest to understand and expand his markets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Brent Blackburn, c/o Harvest Sun Organic Seeds Ltd., Box 252, Estevan, SK, S4A 2A3; phone 1-877-634-7333 (toll free); or
- Visit the website: www.harvestsun.ca; or
- Contact Ken Evans, Agri-Business Development Specialist, Agri-Buiness Development Branch at (306) 848-2847.

ORGANIC BEEF SEMINAR FOCUSES ON BETTER RETURNS

by Craig Klemmer, AAg
Livestock Development Specialist
Livestock Development Branch

Better Beef – Better Returns is a two-day course designed to provide organic beef producers with the tools to optimize their operation through improved nutrition balancing and management understanding.

The course, registered through the Canadian Agriculture Skills Services Program (CASS), will be offered in Saskatoon and Yorkton.

The Saskatoon seminar will be held at the University of Saskatchewan from the evening of Jan. 18 through the afternoon of Jan. 20.

The Yorkton seminar will be held at Parkland Regional College on Jan. 23 and 24, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

On completing the course, participants will have the skills and software to:

- Balance rations using available feed sources;
- Analyze the cost of production for cow-calf operations;
- Conduct break-even analysis for feeder cattle; and
- Utilize these tools for improved management decisions.

Each course will provide about 16 hours of computer and classroom training, and will provide organic livestock producers with an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and to network with other organic livestock producers.

The registration fee is $575, which includes two days of hands-on instruction, a nutrition balancing computer program, management planning calculators, and some follow-up support to apply what participants have learned.

Application forms are available through the Agriculture Knowledge Centre. Please send the completed forms and cheque, payable to Saskatchewan Organic Livestock, to the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, 45 Thatcher Drive E., Moose Jaw, SK, S6J 1L8.

Registration is due by Jan. 8, 2008.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Saskatchewan Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/ and click on Calendar of Events; or
- Call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, toll free, at 1-866-457-2377.

Mechanical weed control for organic producers

"Many organic growers say that mechanical weed control is more like an art than a science. Well, we are trying to find out what the science is behind the art." With that, Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) researcher Dr. Steve Shirtliffe sums up some new research into herbicide alternatives.

In 2004, Shirtliffe and co-researcher Eric Johnson set out to explore the tolerance of oat, wheat and barley to mechanical weed control methods. Three years later, the research, funded in part by ADF, provided some interesting results.

Shirtliffe, an Associate Professor with the Plant Sciences Department at the University of Saskatchewan, said the research will benefit the growing organic sector.

"Weed control in organic crops is difficult. Mechanical techniques offer some options for farmers. When you use mechanical methods they tend to be not nearly as selective as an herbicide would be. A lot of these mechanical methods cause crop damage as well as weed damage so you have to balance it out to make sure that you are not making the matter worse," said Shirtliffe.

The research looked at several mechanical techniques, including in-crop harrowing, mowing and rolling. Shirtliffe said the biggest surprise had to do with oats. "At the onset of our research the thought was, and it was reflected in some production manuals, that post emergent oat should not be in-crop harrowed. The information at the time suggested that wheat and barley were tolerant to this but what we found out is that oat is indeed tolerant to it," explained Shirtliffe. It's unclear why in-crop harrowing was previously not recommended for oat.

"We couldn't find any solid evidence, but speculate that because the position of the growing point of oat is closer to the surface, perhaps it was believed there would be damage. Our research showed oat, in fact, was often more tolerant than even wheat, which most people hold up as being a crop that is quite tolerant in crop harrowing," said Shirtliffe. The findings provide organic oat producers another option for weed control where previously it was not recommended.

Another surprise came from the research into rolling flax as a weed control method. Shirtliffe said the results there were pretty clear. "We found out that it is probably not a good idea," but, he said, there was some anecdotal evidence that it might be effective.

"The idea was that you roll your flax with a roller that you would use for pulse crop production. The thinking is that some weeds, like wild mustard, would be broken down by it and not come back, whereas flax with fibre in its stem would come back up and wouldn't be affected. Well, that never happened. It is something that we are not recommending at all. We looked at it for three years in a row at one location and it did not have any potential," said Shirtliffe. Mowing to control weeds was equally a disappointment.

"We used wheat, oat and barley in the test, mowing them at different stages. The thinking was that the crop would come back quicker than the weeds – giving it a competitive advantage. In the end, we just didn't see any positive yield response or weed control benefit that would indicate that it is a practice that we would ever recommend," said Shirtliffe. However, rotary hoeing did yield some positive results.

"My partner Eric Johnson looked at rotary hoeing. It looks like it might have some promise for organic growers – using a minimum till rotary hoe. It is an implement we are not very familiar with in Western Canada, but it is used in the corn and soy bean belt. Multiple passes with a rotary hoe when the weeds are small is effective at killing some weeds, and there is quite good crop tolerance as well," said Shirtliffe.

While this research will benefit organic producers the most, Shirtliffe points out mechanical weed control techniques can also help non-organic producers reduce herbicide use.

A copy of the ADF report, Mechanical Weed Control for Organic Producers, project number 20030400, can be obtained by phoning Saskatchewan Agriculture at (306) 787-5929, or downloaded from the website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Dr. Steve Shirtliffe, Associate Professor, Plant Sciences Department, University of Saskatchewan at (306) 966-4959.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Saskatchewan Agriculture is constantly updating the wealth of information it makes available to Saskatchewan residents. You can download the most current version of any document posted on our website. You can also call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 to request a hard copy of many items. Below is a list of the latest documents posted, as well as the most frequently visited pages, on our website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

FAQs - Land Rental Arrangements - What are the most common rental arrangements for crop land? Visit: Management | Business Arrangements.

Forage Crop Production Guide - Selection of an appropriate forage species is an important first step in successful forage production. Visit: Production | Crops - Seeding.

FAQs - Detecting Insects in Stored Grain - Why is monitoring stored grain essential? Visit: Production | Crops - Insects.

Beef Cow Rations and Winter Feeding Guidelines - The rations contained in these guides were designed to provide an acceptable level of nutrients. Visit: Production | Livestock - Feeds/Nutrition.

FAQs - Swath Grazing - Feeding on Frozen Crops - What are the salvage options for livestock forage? What costs will swath grazing save? Visit: Production | Livestock - Feeds/Nutrition.

ADF research shows benefit of slow release fertilizer

A recent study funded by Saskatchewan Agriculture's Agriculture Development Fund is proving the effectiveness of seed-row placed or "starter" fertilizer.

Jeff Schoenau, Senior Research Scientist and Saskatchewan Agriculture's Nutrient Management Chair, says the three-year study set out to find if there was any benefit from using a controlled release phosphorus fertilizer compared to conventional fertilizer.

"We wanted to see what impact the controlled release product had on phosphorus availability and tolerance of the crop compared to phosphorus fertilizer placed in the seed row. The second thing we looked at was potassium and the tolerance of different rates of seed-placed potassium, as well as a combination of phosphorus and potassium in the seed row," explained Schoenau.

Many growers use phosphorus and potassium as starter nutrients placed in the seed row or close by – but it is critical to understand what the tolerance levels are for both the nutrients and the nutrients-in-combination in different crops.

"Pretty well all fertilizers are salts, and one of the impacts is that too much fertilizer will hold back water from the germinating seed and seedling. That can manifest itself in delayed germination or inhibition of germination and emergence – what some people call fertilizer burn," said Schoenau.

The study was a follow-up to research that began in 2004, with the final experiments completed in 2006. The crops used in this latest study were: wheat, canola, peas, flax, canaryseed, mustard, chickpeas, pinto beans, alfalfa, bromegrass and oats.

Schoenau says the results were valuable.

"We found out some things about relative tolerance of different crops to fertilizer placed in the seed row," he noted. "Peas are certainly a sensitive crop to fertilizer placed in the seed row. The maximum allowable is fairly low for that crop, somewhere around 15 pounds [of P2O5] per acre as conventional monoammonium phosphate. Forage crops like alfalfa and bromegrass were also sensitive. Mustard, a crop that nobody had done much work on before, also tended to be a little bit more sensitive than canola."

On the other side of the equation, the research showed that cereals like wheat and oats tended to be most tolerant of seed-placed rates, and all crops responded well to the use of a controlled release product.

"We found that, with the controlled release product, we could put much higher rates in the seed row without worrying about injury compared to the conventional monoammonium phosphate," Schoenau said. "So we established that as one of the benefits of a controlled release product."

Schoenau provides a bit of a caveat to the research.

"We did this work in the laboratory under controlled conditions, and things are always different out in the field," he noted. "But it certainly provides a bit of a baseline for relative damage potential among crops using different nutrients, as well as on the formulation of nutrients and how that may impact damage issues."

A copy of the ADF report, Strategies for Improving the Efficiency and Crop Safety of Starter Fertilizer, project number 20050725, can be obtained by phoning Saskatchewan Agriculture at (306) 787-5929, or downloaded from the Saskatchewan Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

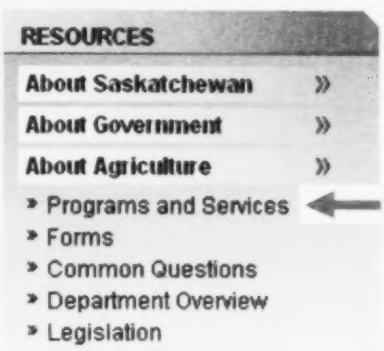
- Contact Jeff Schoenau, Nutrient Management Chair, Saskatchewan Agriculture at (306) 966-6844.

WHAT CAN YOU FIND ON OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WEB PAGE?

There are a number of agricultural programs and services that Saskatchewan Agriculture has for both producers and agri-business.

Livestock brand registration, the Feed Grain and Forage Listing Service, and the Agri-Value Program are only a few of the ones listed on the programs and services web page. Web links to federal, provincial and non-government agricultural programs and services can also found on the programs and services page.

How can you access this information?



The easiest way to check out the programs and services that Saskatchewan Agriculture offers is via our website's front page, since the information is only one click away.

On the left-hand side of the front page, you will see the Programs and Services link. This link takes you directly to the Programs and Services page, where the information is listed alphabetically and you can access the information just by choosing one of the links.

There are also a number of other ways to access Saskatchewan Agriculture's programs and services.

- You can go to the Programs and Services page using the address, www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Programs_Services which brings you directly to the page where you can access the links provided.

or

- A number of the programs are also listed under the various Priorities on our site. For example, if you are looking for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, you can go to the Programs and Services page or the Management | Programs category.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

Crop Production Show 2008

by Ray McVicar
Manager, Production Technology
Crop Development Branch

The Western Canadian Crop Production Show is western Canada's premier grain industry showcase, presenting information to producers on the latest technology, services, and products. This year's show will be held at Saskatoon's Prairieland Park from January 7 to 10, 2008.

More than 95 per cent of the people who walk through the doors are directly involved in grain production, so it is a great place for grain producers to get together. The attendance at last year's show was 10,877.

Crop Production Week is going on at the same time. While the two events are separate entities, they collaborate to serve the thousands of farmers who travel to Saskatoon that week. This year, they are also collaborating with a common website at www.cropweek.com to make it more convenient for producers to access all the information they need.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Lori Cates, Agriculture Manager, Saskatoon Prairieland Park at (306) 931-7149; or
- Visit www.cropweek.com.

PULSE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

by Ray McVicar
Manager, Production Technology
Crop Development Branch

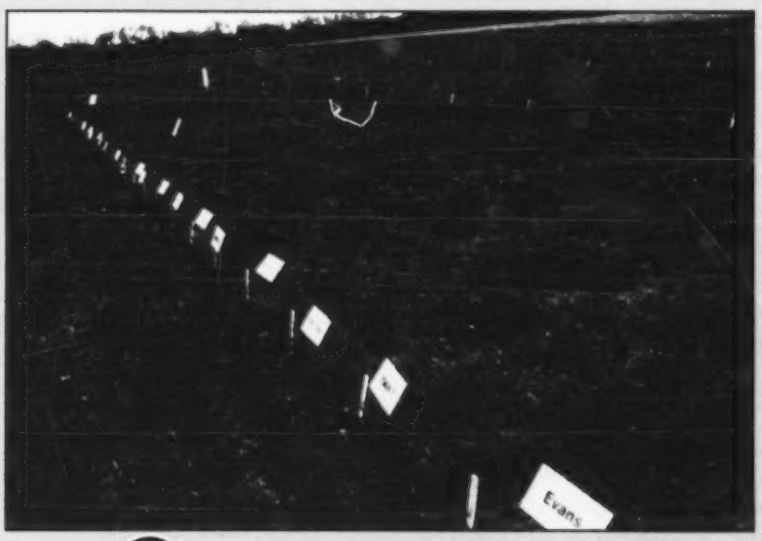
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers will be hosting pulse industry development workshops in southern Saskatchewan in 2008. The workshops will highlight new developments in pulse marketing, varieties, pest control, agronomy, fertility, processing and value adding. Many pulse crop industry players will be in attendance. Please mark your calendar and plan to be there.

Pulse Crop Development Workshops
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

February 5, 2008	February 6, 2008	February 7, 2008
Palliser Pavilion	Heritage Inn	McKenna Auditorium
Swift Current	Moose Jaw	Weyburn

- **Industry displays**
- **Pulse Crop Markets:** Brian Clancey, Stat Communications Ltd.
- **New Agronomy Research:** Dr. Yantai Gan, AAFC
- **Round the World with Red Lentils:** Dr. Bert Vandenberg, U. of S.
- **Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Report:** Director, SPG
- **New Pulse Crop Varieties:** Drs. Tom Warkentin, Bunyamin Tar'an and Bert Vandenberg, U. of S.
- **Chickpea Ascochyta Blight Sentinel Project:** Penny Pearse, Saskatchewan Agriculture
- **Pulse Crop Fertility:** Ken Panchuk, Saskatchewan Agriculture

Pre-register by February 1, 2008 by calling the
Agriculture Knowledge Centre toll free at 1-866-457-2377
Cost is $15 - Pay at the door - includes lunch.



EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	PHONE	EMAIL / WEBPAGE
Jan. 5-12	Crop Production Week	Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/cpw.html
Jan. 7-10	Crop Production Show	Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropproductiononline.com
Jan. 5-6	Saskatchewan Ag Grads Association Conference	TCU Place, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/saga.html
Jan. 7	Flax Day 2008: Growing Flax First - Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/flax.html
Jan. 7	Saskatchewan Winter Cereals Development Commission Conference	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/wintercereals.html
Jan. 7-8	Pulse Days 2008: Building the Bioeconomy - Saskatchewan Pulse Growers	Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/pulse.html
Jan. 8	Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission Conference	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/oats.html
Jan. 8-9	Saskatchewan Seed Growers Association Conference	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/seed.html
Jan. 9	Mustard Day - Saskatchewan Mustard Development Commission	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/mustard.html
Jan. 9-10	Canola Days - Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission and Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK		http://www.cropweek.com/agenda/canola.html
Jan. 18-20	Better Beef - Better Returns	University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon	1-866-457-2377	http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Calendar of Events
Jan. 23-24	Better Beef - Better Returns	Parkland Regional College, Yorkton	1-866-457-2377	http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Calendar of Events
Jan. 30	Opportunity Knocks: Agri-Business Conference	Gold Ridge Centre, North Battleford	(306) 446-7964	jwood@agr.gov.sk.ca
Feb. 5-28	Sleepless in Saskatchewan	various locations (see page 18)	1-866-680-0006	kimhoff@agr.gov.sk.ca
Feb. 5	Pulse Crop Development Workshop	Palliser Pavilion, Swift Current	1-866-457-2377	www.aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca
Feb. 6	Pulse Crop Development Workshop	Heritage Inn, Moose Jaw	1-866-457-2377	www.aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca
Feb. 7	Pulse Crop Development Workshop	McKenna Auditorium, Weyburn	1-866-457-2377	www.aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca
Feb. 8	Saskatchewan Organic Research Workshop	Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon	1-866-457-2377	www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/Calendar of Events
Feb. 11	Moose Mountain Ag Days	Prairie Place, Arcola	(306) 848-2857	

MOOSE MOUNTAIN AG DAYS FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIPS

by Adrienne Hanson
Livestock Development Specialist
Livestock Development Branch

The sixth annual Moose Mountain Ag Days are just around the corner. This year, the information day is being held February 11, 2008 at Prairie Place in Arcola, with a great lineup of speakers. The organizing group consists of a few producers who have a passion for the latest agriculture innovation and wish to promote and sustain the agriculture industry and lifestyle in the area. The group has selected some top notch speakers in hopes of drawing a large crowd.

Traditionally, speakers have focused on beef production. However, the organizers have recognized the benefits that both farmers and ranchers gain by working together. The focus of Ag Days this year will be on co-operation. The theme is "Partnerships: cattle and crops work together for the land." Keynote speaker Ken Meter is an economist from Minnesota who developed the "Buy fresh, buy local" food campaign. Meter has some very interesting points to make on marketing foods locally, as well as the social and economic factors involved.

There are many differences between the farmer and the rancher, but one common factor inextricably links them: the health of the soil. Soil health is a major factor that determines production capabilities, whether the final goal is healthy calves or a bumper wheat crop. Producers know the health of the soil promotes the health of their business.

Dr. Jeff Schoenau of the University of Saskatchewan will share information regarding soil health with respect to winter feeding. Bruce Chern will discuss forage rotation in crop lands to promote fertility. Norbert Beaujot of Seedmaster will speak on the latest technological advancements with respect to equipment, and more excellent speakers have yet to be confirmed!

Beyond the useful knowledge gained from the presentations, this seminar is an ideal opportunity to meet and build relationships between crop and beef producers, as well as an excellent way to beat the winter doldrums.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For registration and more information, contact Saskatchewan Agriculture in Weyburn at (306) 848-2857.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture